

RELIGIOUS.

[PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.]

The Methodist District Conference.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND CHURCH LITERATURE.

We can scarcely conceive the existence of a division of sentiment on the subject before us. It is recognized by all, that education makes the man. The lessons is the practice of method. The character impressed upon the young heart are ineffaceable. They live while life lasts, and survive the legions of passing thought, which crowd the brain through the after business or life.

The vital importance of sustaining the educational interests of the Church at the present time, cannot fail to impress the minds of our brethren. The onward progress of the age unyieldingly demands that the Pulpits of the land be filled by men of acquired as well as natural abilities. Teachers must be qualified to teach and Preachers prepared to preach. The training of the soul by the Holy Ghost must be followed by the severe discipline of arduous study, if we would have our preaching successful. To a knowledge of the Word of God it is absolutely necessary that we add a knowledge of the liberal arts if we intend to keep pace with the present march of intellect.

And the education of the children of the Church is not less important than that of her ministers. Knowledge is power is an old aphorism, and it is manifestly true. In the coming years as in the present, the sceptre of government shall be swayed by the men of intellectual capacity. Is there a choice between being ruled by the sons of the Church, trained in Seminaries where the religion of Jesus Christ is a prominent study in the curriculum, or by those the children of the world, educated in a charity that begins, centres and ends at home?

How should our daughters be forgotten? Woman's influence the soft, the gentle, the pure, the holy, and the strong, the great bond of Union in earth's families, and the most potent agency next to Providence, in human affairs should be toned and elevated by religious education. It is the great boast of Christianity that she found the beautiful of our race, trampled beneath the feet of oppression, her attractive guise well nigh hidden beneath the mire of degradation, and raised her from shame and placed her where Woman's true glories have been developed and appreciated. It is born still to carry on this glorious work.

For the accomplishment of this purpose we are not destitute of means. Wofford College, begun and endowed in the days of our former prosperity, entered upon a course of marked usefulness to the country and church. From its halls have gone forth young men, teachers of the people, whose aim it was not only to extend the knowledge of the schools, but to convey with it the knowledge of the word of God. The value of such a co-operation in the work of saving souls is beyond estimation. Standing as they do at the head-springs of society, it is theirs to cast into the bitter waters the salt of healing, whereby the fountains of infidelity are changed into the waters of life. In addition to these, Wofford College has made valuable contributions to the Ministry of our State, and we cannot afford to lose this nursery of the South Carolina Conference. In the general calamity which befel our country, the endowment fund was entirely lost, and this noble institution is now reduced to great extremity.

For three years its Professors with a small staff of Christian laborers, even in the noblest days of Christian heroism have stood by the side of our church, suffering privations of which few of us have an adequate conception. It has been said "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church," and if it be true that suffering in the cause of Christianity produces abundant results of good, then Wofford College cannot fail to reap thirty, sixty and an hundred fold in the years to come. We call upon all the Church throughout the length and breadth of the land, that this ingathering may begin.

The Orangeburg Female Seminary though not officially connected with the Conference is supplying the demand for female education, which has been severely felt in this part of the Conference, since the suspension of the Columbia Female College. The embarrassed condition of the finances of the country present formidable obstacles to success, but by the persevering industry of the Principal, Rev. Wm. G. Connor, the Institution is in a fair way of being permanently established. For the School we bespeak an extended patronage.

The Committee deems it almost useless to make an effort to impress upon the minds of the meeting the importance of a church paper, since we all know the value of it, though we can but say, there is a want of interest in this direction within the bounds of the district. The Southern Christian Advocate, the paper of our Conference, is sadly neglected, as we see from a report of Dr. Myers. There are within the bounds of the South Carolina Conference, at a rough calculation, 30,000 white members; and perhaps 8,000 Methodist families, and yet we do not suppose there are more than 1,000 copies taken within its bounds. From the above we see that something is wanting, and we urge upon the brethren the importance of taking this most important of journals, which with a bright face, so to speak, and a smile for every one, telling of all parts of our Conference—where this brother is sowing the goodly

seed of piety, in what part of the moral vineyard the seed has taken root and where it is growing or has grown—and where the harvest is reaped and gathered home.

All of us will readily admit the anxiety felt when our Conference is in session, to know who has been sent to administer to us for the year, or where this brother or that has been sent. The sad financial state of the country and irregularity of the mails &c., have been the reasons given by many for not taking the paper, but we are glad that these difficulties are disappearing, and we therefore would urge our brethren to do all in their power to increase the subscription list of our Conference paper.

We propose the organization of a society for the aid of our College, to be known as the Wofford Association. Therefore

Resolved, That we organize the Wofford Association and recommend it to the Conference to aid us in procuring at least 500 members [at ten dollars per annum.] In behalf of the Committee.

W. G. CONNOR, Chairman.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MISSIONS.

We have noticed with regret a decline of the Missionary spirit in our church. In searching out the cause of this decline, we suppose it to be in the nature of our Missionary Work in former years. Much of our missionary funds were expended in furnishing the gospel to our colored population than in slavery. Since they have been liberated, and many of them have dissolved their connection with our church, our people have jumped to the conclusion that their missionary contributions have been misapplied. That this is an erroneous conclusion we verily believe. Let us consider this matter; in the first place these contributions were, in a great measure, the product of slave labor, and it was right and just that this much should have been contributed to their spiritual benefit. We must remember that the slaves themselves were not the authors of their own liberation, on the contrary, the great majority of them were quiet and faithful during the whole process down to its final termination. As a return for our contributions in their behalf, we have the consolation to believe that hundreds and thousands have gone safe home to Heaven through our instrumentality. Again, the gospel we preached to them civilized them, and this civilization preserved them in order and quietude during the late transformation of society when the arm of the law was powerless, who can calculate the damage they might have done us had it been otherwise.

Now that they have set up for themselves, and possess the capital of labor, which is fully enough to sustain their operations, we may congratulate ourselves on having finished our work in that field, and turn our attention to the greater field, which is the world. No one can fail, if he properly apprehends the claims of the world upon the Church, to recognize the Missionary Work of the Church. Christianity is missionary in its spirit and in its work. The promise made to Christ long before his advent, "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession," is fulfilled by missionary effort "through the foolishness of preaching." Jesus clothed with all power and authority just before his departure to prepare a place in Heaven for his redeemed and sanctified ones, commanded his disciples to go into all the world and preach his gospel to every creature. The missionary enterprise, than which there is nothing destined to achieve greater victories and gather richer trophies, is without doubt, of divine origin. Through it gold and incense are to be brought unto the Lord and His praises shewn forth. Through an aggressive gospel the Gentiles are to be brought into the light of the Lord, and Kings to the brightness of his rising, and the King of Kings have dominion from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth.

The Methodist Episcopal Church South has her Missionary organizations, and her Mission fields. Her Domestic Missions are of vast importance, urgent in their demands, and encouraging in their promise of results if properly cultivated. Two of these are within our own District. The Graniteville Mission is in a prosperous condition, and although it has met with a severe loss in the death of Mr. William Gregg, Sr., the founder of the Village, it still promises to stand up to the Missionary Society in its own support.

The Lexington Mission is located in a poor section, but among a people who highly appreciate the gospel and do all they can to support it among them. Be it therefore,

Resolved, That we employ our best efforts to support the Missionary cause in our church.

J. S. CONNOR,

Chairman.

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